

Retailer of the Year Award Sample Entry Responses

Following are excerpts of entry responses from some of our past ROY recipients.

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS:

We are a 7,500 square foot retail shop full of home décor, gifts, garden accessories and floral design.

COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMERS:

We send thank you cards to all of our customers after a purchase. We offer free gift wrap and enclosure cards. We offer a glass of water, iced tea or soda while you shop and some sort of munchie.

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY:

*President, XXX Theatre
Board Member, XXX Main Street
President, Elks Lodge
Troop Leader, Cub Scouts*

DESCRIBE ANY SPECIAL PROGRAMS OR INCENTIVES FOR CUSTOMERS:

One of a kind floral designs are a huge part of our business. Customers are one on one with us being involved with every part of the creative process of customizing their designs for an office or home. So in the back work room most all the time you will see XXX working with a client picking and choosing containers, florals and ribbons while laughing, talking and having a soda or tea. This is the laid back part that all our customers enjoy so much. We have floral design classes for ladies luncheons which involves usually more than 15 women who belong to a certain garden club, business club or red hat type club who visit our shop and get a behind the scenes look at putting an arrangement of that season together along with lots of chit-chat and food.

DESCRIBE ANYTHING YOU MAY HAVE DONE TO PROMOTE RETAILING AS AN INDUSTRY:

Answer #1: We started doing art shows all over FL, GA, AL about 12 years ago which was a great step to help us get our name out. This enabled us to go to the customer and not sit around waiting for the clients to come to us. It was a great advertising tool for us and it really helped our custom orders by huge leaps. The best part was if the potential client ordered something at the show they would come to our shop in XXX to pick it up. This brought more people to XXX and once they came to my shop for their order they almost always brought more than just their custom order.

Answer #2: On a local basis, I mentor another small business owner. We meet monthly and discuss topics surrounding his immediate concerns. I offer opinion and advice but not direction. He must guide his company himself and make his own choices.

COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYEES:

Good employees are the backbone of any company. Happy employees translate into happy customers very simply because they care about the company and the products they

produce for it. I have always believed that my company exists not only to benefit my family, but also to benefit the families of those that contribute to its success.

While we offer the standard fare of benefits (two weeks paid vacation, seven paid holidays, 50% match on 401(k) contributions, paid sick time, paid funeral leave, major medical benefits, etc.) we also include a few "fun things". For instance I thought it would be nice to have your birthday off with pay so we do that for all staff members.

I also try to encourage involvement in company events by all employees. Normally we will have a summer event (maybe a bowling outing) and a holiday event like a Christmas party. I encourage staff members to bring their families and get to know each other a little better. Over the years this has helped to build excellent camaraderie and friendships among them. It allows them to see each other outside of the work environment and to gain a better understanding of the people they work beside.

PLEASE TELL US OF ANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR INVOLVEMENTS IN COMMUNITY SERVICE. LIST THE ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU AND/OR YOUR BUSINESS IS INVOLVED, WHAT YOU AND/OR YOUR EMPLOYEES DO FOR THESE GROUPS, AND WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY:

A business must form a mutually beneficial relationship with its community in order to grow and prosper. A company that is able to achieve this provides not only a healthy robust opportunity for its staff but also contributes greatly to the overall economy of the community.

Our involvement includes: 17 years of sponsorship of the school medallion program; ten years of sponsorship of the Lincoln High School Christmas basketball tournament; five years of sponsorship of the Rotary Golf Tournament; five years of sponsorship of the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Leadership Awards program; countless other single donations and minor sponsorships throughout the years. Most importantly, we are ALWAYS donating or sponsoring something. It is a line item in our budget process (which always goes over budget!). We provide manpower, products, or contributions for many, many groups and organizations in our community. No business can simply take from a community. It must give back in order to succeed. Success is measured by more than just dollars.